

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 1517S
Date of Senate Approval 01/19/17

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 12 (ENVR): Reduce the core course requirements in the ENVR major;
Increase the number of credit hours required for individual
concentrations;
Modify the requirements for the ecology concentration**

Effective Date: Fall 2017

1. Delete: On page 159, item I under **Environmental Studies majors must fulfill the following requirements:**

- I. Required courses in the major—19–22 hours: ENVR 130, 241, 330, 490; and two courses from: ENVR 234, 282, 334 or ECON 337 (prerequisite ECON 102).

Add: On page 159, in place of deleted entry:

- I. Required courses in the major—16 hours: ENVR 130, 241, 330, 490; and one course from: ENVR 234, 282, or 334. ENVR 334 is required for students completing the Environmental Management and Policy concentration.

Impact statement: There will be no significant impacts from these changes. Reducing the number of required ENVR core courses will allow students the freedom to take another three-credit elective of their own choosing across campus. ENVR 234, 282 and 334 nearly always over-enroll and close early every time they are offered, so requiring one fewer of these courses should make it easier for students to enroll in the course of their choosing. ECON 337 is generally taken only by students in our Environmental Management and Policy concentration, and will remain a required course within that concentration, so this proposal will have no impact on that course.

Rationale: We propose reducing the required courses in the major by one course (thus reducing the total number of credits in the major by 3 hours). In addition, we propose eliminating ECON 337 from the list of options. ECON 337 is generally taken only by students in our Environmental Management and Policy (EMP) concentration, and will remain a required course within that concentration. Since ECON 337 has a prerequisite of ECON 102, virtually no students outside of the EMP concentration pursue this option. ENVR 334 is also required for the EMP concentration, so specifically stating this in the core requirements will further help to inform students of their requirements.

2. **Delete:** On page 160, the entry under **Individual Concentration in Environmental Studies:**

In consultation with his or her academic advisor, a student may select an individual course of study of at least 25 credit hours in preparation for careers in such areas as Environmental Journalism, Environmental Planning or Human Ecology. Students choosing an Individualized Concentration must file an application with the department chair. The application must contain a letter of justification and a complete listing of courses in the proposed concentration. It must be submitted at the time the major is declared. The Individualized Concentration requires the completion of I, II and III above.

Add: On page 160, in place of deleted entry:

In consultation with his or her academic advisor, a student may select an individual course of study of at least **30 credit hours** in preparation for careers in such areas as Environmental Journalism, Environmental Planning or Human Ecology. Students choosing an Individual Concentration must file an application with the department chair. The application must contain a letter of justification and a complete listing of courses in the proposed concentration. **At least 12 of the 30 hours must be in upper-level ENVR laboratory or field-based courses.** It must be submitted at the time the major is declared. The Individual Concentration requires the completion of I, II and III above.

Impact statement: Students will need to take five additional hours in their individualized concentrations. However, in practice, we have already been advising students to take 30 hours (rather than 25), so they can gain sufficient depth in their area of interest. Due to the varied nature of individual concentrations, the additional hours will be spread among a wide variety of courses and departments. Thus, there will be no significant impact on any one department.

Rationale: The number of credit hours required in the Individual Concentration has been 25 for many years, which is fewer hours than we require in the Ecology and Environmental Biology concentration (currently 28-34 hours, proposed in Item II of this document to change to 28-30 hours), the Earth Science concentration (31+ hours), and the Environmental Management and Policy concentration (33-36 hours). This discrepancy is a holdover from many years ago; the number of hours required for this concentration has not been scrutinized or evaluated for some time because historically, few students have selected this option. However, we have seen a recent surge of interest in this concentration and more students are submitting proposals.

We seek to increase the total number of required credit hours to 30, to make this concentration more equivalent to the others in our degree program. The current model of 25 hours in the concentration does not provide students with sufficient depth, particularly in an individual concentration, which is generally interdisciplinary. We already advise most students to propose 30 hours for their individual concentrations, so this is already in practice, for the most part.

Because we offer a B.S. degree, we propose that 12 of the 30 required hours be upper-level ENVR laboratory or field-based courses. This will also bring this concentration more in line with the other three concentrations in our department, all of which require a minimum number of ENVR courses (the Ecology concentration requires at least 14 ENVR hours, Earth Science requires at least 27 ENVR hours, and Environmental Management and Policy requires at least 15 ENVR hours).

3. Delete: On page 159, under **Concentration in Ecology and Environmental Biology:**

28–34 hours distributed as follows: BIOL 125 and 126 or the equivalent; BIOL 210 or 211; one course from ATMS 103, ENVR 105, 338, 385, CHEM 231 or PHYS 131; one 3-4 hour advanced ENVR elective; 18 hours of Ecology and Biology electives chosen from BIOL 210 or 211 (whichever is not selected above), 320, 322, 323, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 340, 350, 351, 356, 357, 360, 442; or ENVR 312, 322, 323, 341, 343, 346, 347, 348, 358, 360, 364, 390, 396. The 18 hours must include at least three 4-credit courses; and at least 11 of the 18 hours must be taken in ENVR.

Add: On page 159, in place of deleted entry:

At least 28 hours distributed as follows: BIOL 210 or 211; one course from ATMS 103, ENVR 105, **106**, 338, **362**, 385, CHEM 231 (**if not selected to fulfill the departmental chemistry requirement**) or PHYS 131; one 3-4 hour advanced ENVR elective; and 18 hours of Ecology and Biology electives chosen from BIOL 210 or 211 (whichever is not selected above), 320, 322, 323, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 340, 350, 351, 356, 357, 360, 442; or ENVR 312, 322, 323, 341, 343, 346, 347, 348, 349, 358, 360, 364, 390, 391, 396. The 18 hours must include at least three 4-credit courses; and at least 11 of the 18 hours must be taken in ENVR.

Impact statement: There will be a small reduction in the number of ENVR students who enroll in BIOL 125 and 126. In recent years, we have advised fewer students to enroll in these courses, so the impact will be small. Students will be freed from this four-credit requirement, and will be able to take an additional elective of their choice across campus.

Adding ENVR 106 and 362 to the list of courses satisfying the physical science requirement will have negligible impacts on enrollment in any of those courses, as there are a number of courses to choose from, all of which are offered regularly.

Rationale: We propose eliminating the requirement for BIOL 125 and 126 (introductory biology for non-majors) from this concentration. It has been a “soft” requirement, meaning that when advising students, we glean their level of biology preparedness by talking with them about their high school and college biology courses, and place them in BIOL 125 and 126 only if we think they would benefit from these courses. The current catalog wording (“BIOL 125 and 126 or equivalent”) has allowed us to waive this requirement for students with adequate biology preparation from high school or community college.

Unfortunately, some students have been placed unnecessarily into 125 and 126, either if advised from outside of the department, or if they self-advise and enroll in the course merely because it appears on the list. Historically, there was a time when previous faculty members believed BIOL 125 and 126 were important to the success of students taking BIOL 210 and 211. However, they are not listed as prerequisites for 210 or 211, and we no longer believe these courses are imperative for student success.

We also propose adding two additional elective choices to the list of courses that satisfy the physical science requirement for the ecology concentration. Both ENVR 106 (Earth History) and ENVR 362 (Water Chemistry) are suitable elective choices for this requirement, and are offered regularly.

Finally, we propose including wording in the catalog so students know if they take CHEM 231 (Organic Chemistry) to fulfill their departmental chemistry requirement, this course will not also satisfy the physical science requirement for the Ecology concentration. This will make it clear to students that they need two different courses.